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position (as depicted) by springs or other retaining features (not depicted). When an external magnetic field approaches electrical connector 900 as shown in FIG. 9B, magnet 908 is drawn towards the end of electrical contacts 904. This configuration can increase the strength of a magnetic coupling that helps maintain an electrical coupling between electrical connector 900 and another magnetic connector.

FIGS. 9C-9D show cross-sectional side views of electrical connector 900 in accordance with section lines A-A and B-B, respectively. In particular, FIG. 9C depicts a retention feature taking the form of spring 906. In FIG. 9C spring 910 is depicted having biased magnet 908 and shunt 912 towards a rear end of electrical contact 904. Shunt 912 directs a magnetic field emitted by magnet 908 out and away from connector 900 and towards connector 920. This can increase the range of magnet 908 and reduce the likelihood of that magnetic field from interfering with other electronics associated with connector 900.

FIG. 9D shows how when connector 900 gets close enough to connector 920 the resulting magnetic force between magnet 908 and connector 920 can exceed the force being applied by spring 910 so that magnet 908 is drawn towards the front of electrical contact 904. In this way, a magnetic coupling between electrical connector 900 and connector 920 can be maximized when the two connectors are coupled together.

FIGS. 10A-10B show an alternative design taking the form of connector 1000. FIG. 10A depicts connector 1000 and how it includes magnet 1002 and shunt 1004, which both remain stationary with respect to electrical contact 1006 regardless of the application of an external magnetic field. FIG. 10B shows how both electrical contact 1006, magnet 1002 and shunt 1004 move in response to approaching magnetic connector 1010. This movement is made possible by a sliding connection between electrical contact 1006 and lead 1008. The sliding connection can take many forms, including but not limited to a bearing with stops allowing a predefined amount of movement of electrical contact 1004 with respect to lead 1008.

FIGS. 11A-11B show multiple views of a connector plug 1100 similar to the embodiments depicted in FIGS. 9A-10B. In particular, FIG. 11A shows how connector plug 1100 has a pill-shaped protrusion that includes four electrical contacts 1102 and can be packaged with circuitry allowing for plug 1100 to be electrically coupled with receptacle connector 1152 of electronic device 1150 in either of two orientations. Plug 1100 can also include insulating material 1104 disposed between each electrical contacts 1102, which are operable to electrically isolate each of electrical contacts 1102 from each other. Similarly, receptacle connector 1154 includes an insulating material pattern corresponding to the arrangement of insulating material 1104. Both receptacle connector 1152 and plug 1100 can include magnets for facilitating a robust connection between connector plug 1100 and receptacle connector 1152. As described above, the magnets can be arranged in a complementary array configured to facilitate precise alignment of connector plug 1100 with receptacle connector 1152. In some embodiments, the pill-shaped protrusion of connector plug 1100 can be configured to extend and retract when approaching and drawing away from receptacle connector 1152. This can be carried out in many ways, including ways similar to those depicted in FIGS. 10A-10B.

FIG. 11B shows an example of how a magnetic connector similar to the one depicted in FIGS. 10A-10B can be used to provide a magnet and electrical connector behind electrical connector 1102b. Such a configuration beneficially

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allows the retraction of magnet 1108 away from electrical connector 1102b when the connector is not in use. Such a configuration would reduce the likelihood of magnet 1108 adversely affecting other magnetically sensitive components when connector 1100 is not in active use. This configuration could also prevent connector plug 1100 from inadvertently becoming electrically coupled with another device that doesn't include magnetically attractable material sufficient to attract magnet 1108.

The various aspects, embodiments, implementations or features of the described embodiments can be used separately or in any combination. Various aspects of the described embodiments can be implemented by software, hardware or a combination of hardware and software.

The foregoing description, for purposes of explanation, used specific nomenclature to provide a thorough understanding of the described embodiments. However, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that the specific details are not required in order to practice the described embodiments. Thus, the foregoing descriptions of specific embodiments are presented for purposes of illustration and description. They are not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the described embodiments to the precise forms disclosed. It will be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art that many modifications and variations are possible in view of the above teachings.

What is claimed is:

1. An electronic device, comprising:

a device enclosure defining a connector opening;
a contact structure located in the connector opening in the device enclosure, the contact structure comprising:
a contact housing defining a plurality of passages wherein each passage has an opening at a surface of the contact housing; and

a plurality of spring-biased pin assemblies arranged in a linear configuration and configured to carry at least one electrical signal, each of the spring-biased pin assemblies located in a corresponding passage of the plurality of passages, wherein each spring-biased pin assembly of the plurality of spring-biased pin assemblies comprises:

a barrel defining a channel and having a first end electrically coupled to circuitry within the electronic device and a second end opposite the first end and having a pin opening;

a movable pin assembly disposed within the channel, the movable pin assembly extending through the pin opening in the barrel and having a non-planar contact surface;

a magnet disposed within the channel and positioned adjacent the first end, and

a spring disposed within the barrel and positioned between the non-planar surface of the movable pin assembly and the magnet.

2. The electronic device as recited in claim 1, wherein the non-planar surface is non-orthogonal with a direction of travel of the movable pin assembly within the channel.

3. The electronic device as recited in claim 1, wherein the electronic device comprises a keyboard.

4. The electronic device as recited in claim 1, further comprising a plurality of magnets aligned with a linear configuration of the plurality of spring-biased pin assemblies and configured to keep the contact structure in contact with a corresponding receptacle connector.

5. The electronic device as recited in claim 4, wherein one or more magnets of the plurality of magnets is disposed